

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 091148Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6765
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 827

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: XGDS1
TAGS: PINT, UK (NI)
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE

1. FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED BEHALF CONGEN BELFAST: QUOTE. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MERLYN REES MADE SEVERAL INTERESTING COMMENTS IN THE COURSE OF A RELAXED EVENING WITH CONSUL GENERAL AND OTHERS ON MAY 5.

2. SECSTATE REES BELIEVES GREAT THREAT TO PEACE NORTHERN IRELAND IS NOT RPT NOT PROVISIONAL IRA BUT PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY GROUPS. SECSTATE SAID PROVISIONALS CAN CAUSE CONSIDERABLE PHYSICAL DAMAGE BUT ULTIMATE CATASTROPHE WOULD BE PROTESTANTS SEIZING ISSUE OF IRA VIOLENCE AS JUSTIFICATION AND LAUNCHING CIVIL WAR. HE BELIEVES PROTESTANT PARAMILITARIES NOW ARMED AT LEAST AS HEAVILY AS PROVISIONALS AND SCOFFED AT SUGGESTION SOME LOYALISTS BELIEVE ARMS PARITY WILL NOT BE REACHED WITHIN NEXT SIX MONTHS. MR. REES SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE RELEASE DETAINEES AND RISK WRATH LOYALISTS.

3. MR. REES RELUCTANT SPECULATE ABOUT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OR COMMENT ON ELECTION RESULTS. HE SAID HE MUST AVOID INVOLVEMENT WITH PROCESS AIMING TOWARD "ULSTER SOLUTION" AND HE PLANNED MEET IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD LATER IN WEEK IN DUBLIN TO CONVEY THIS VIEW. IF CONVENTION "FAILED ABSOLUTELY" HE SAID, ONLY

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OPTION IS CONTINUED DIRECT RULE FROM WESTMINSTER. HE EMPHASIZED

VERY FEW LABOUR PARTY MEMBERS PARLIAMENT WISHED PULL OUT OF NORTH-ERN IRELAND IN VIEW PREDICTABILITY OF CONSEQUENCES OF PULLOUT.

4. SECSTATE SAID HARLAND AND WOLFF SHIPYARD NOT RPT NOT ECONOMIC-ALLY VIABLE AND SHOULD BE SHUT DOWN IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID TO DO SO HOWEVER WOULD BE TO PUT 10,000 NEW UDA (ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION) MEMBERS ON THE STREET.

5. MR. REES PRAISED GENERAL SIR FRANK KING AS SOLDIER AND MAN AND BLAMED PRESS FOR IMPLYING THERE DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND GENERAL WHEN IN REALITY THERE WERE NONE. SECSTATE SAID GENERAL WOULD COMPLETE NORTHERN IRELAND TOUR IN JULY AND GO ON TO A VERY GOOD ASSIGNMENT.

6. MR. REES MINIMIZED EXTENT DISSENSION WITHIN LABOUR PARTY ABOUT EC MEMBERSHIP. HE SAID THERE ONLY TWO CONSTITUENCY PARTIES SERIOUSLY OPPOSED TO GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THERE NO RPT NO SIGNS OF DISCORD AT CABINET MEETINGS. SPICER. UNQUOTE.

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